THE POSITION OF THE NOUN MODIFIER IN COLLOQUIAL MEXICAN SPANISH

BY

ELBERT WINFRED RINGO

B.A., Park College, 1927

M.A., Middlebury College, 1929

AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN SPANISH
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Professor Henry R. Kahane has directed this study. I wish to express to him my deepest gratitude for his inspiration and never-failing encouragement.

R. UNIV. BIBLIOTHEEK LEIDEN

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1. Introduction.

1.1. Purpose. This study is a description of the structure of the noun expression in terms of the position of the noun modifier. The material used is that of colloquial Mexican Spanish, taken from the spoken parts of forty-nine plays published by Mexican authors in the twentieth century. The speech of the characters is that of the lower, middle, and upper social classes. Regional and social differences have not been taken into consideration. No historical, stylistic, or psychological interpretation has been attempted. The criterion of meaning has been used only when position contrast stands for difference in meaning.

1.2 Arrangement. This study contains two main parts. The material investigated has first been arranged according to the relationship of the modifiers to each other in terms of the relative distance of each from the head. The material has then been arranged according to the relationship of the modifier to the head in terms of of anteposition and postposition. In this abstract, only one example is given of each class.

2. The modifiers in relation to each other.

2.1 The order is invariable. The modifiers are connected by close juncture.

2.11. The modifiers are simple adjectives.

2.111. The adjectives are of unequal class. The following classification of adjectives is based on form, not meaning. The classes found were qualifying adjective one, qualifying adjective two, limiting adjective, defining adjective, and *todo*. There is, however, a relation between form and meaning. It can be stated that as far as preceding simple adjectives are concerned, the unit between the head and the modifier becomes stronger with diminishing distance. In other words, a given modifier modifies everything that follows up to and including the head.

2.111.1. The adjectives are qualifying. The adjective class which may be closer in position to the head than any other adjective class, either in anteposition or postposition, will be called qualifying. There are, however, again on the basis of position, two classes of qualifying adjectives, adjective one, and adjective two. Adjective one is an adjective which normally does not precede, but follows the head immediately, whereas adjective two is one which either precedes the head, or follows the head plus adjective one. Therefore, for adjective two, the equation: immediate anteposition is equivalent

to away postposition, can be established. This means that adjective one is more connected to the head than adjective two, or, in other words, that the unit between adjective one and the head is stronger than the unit between adjective two and the head.

a. Adjective two is in immediate anteposition.
enormes problemas espirituales.

b. Adjective two is in away postposition.
dos trabajos comerciales *urgentes.*

2.111.2. The adjective is limiting. The limiting adjective precedes qualifying adjective two.
algún mal fondo.

2.111.3. The adjective is defining. The defining adjective is the adjective which precedes the limiting.
la misma estúpida persecución.

2.111.4. The adjective is *todo. Todo* precedes the definer.
todos los demás amigos.

2.112. The modifiers are of equal class.

2.112.1. The adjectives are qualifying one. The adjective closer to the head, joins with the head to form a unit which is modified by a second qualifying adjective one.
una congestión *cerebral alcohólica.*

2.112.2. The adjectives are qualifying two. The adjective closer to the head joins with the head to form a unit which is modified by a second qualifying adjective two.
con *admirable buen* sentido.

2.112.3. The adjectives are limiting. When two limiting adjectives precede the head, the ordinals are closest to the head, preceded by the cardinal. The cardinal, or a numerical expression such as *muchos* may be preceded by *otro. Otro* may be preceded by *alguno, ninguno, cualquiera,* and *tanto.*
las *tres primeras* páginas.
otros muchos muchachos.
algún otro amante.

2.112.4. The adjectives are defining. The possessive is closer to the head than the demonstrative.
este nuestro pueblo.

2.12. One or more of the modifiers is a function word expression.

2.121. The modifiers are of unequal form.

2.121.1. The modifiers are simple adjective and function word expression. Usually the order is based on form; sometimes, however, the principle of the unit breaks the principle of form, and the simple adjective is separated from the head by a function word phrase.

a. The simple adjective precedes the function word expression.
queremos ser rabos *verdes de la revolución.*
b. The function word phrase precedes the simple adjective.
hombre *de mundo profesional.*

2.121.2. The modifiers are function word phrase and function word clause. The function word phrase precedes the function word clause.
tiempos *de prosa vil que corren.*

2.122. The modifiers are of equal form. When two function word phrases follow the head, the more distant modifies the unit consisting of the head plus the closer modifier.
caldo *de chile sin sal.*

2.13. One of the modifiers is a modified adjective.

2.131. The adjective is preceded by a monosyllabic element, and may be treated as a simple qualifying adjective.
una lesión *cardíaca muy extraordinaria.*

2.132. The adjective is followed by a function word phrase. The adjective modified by a function word phrase follows the unmodified adjective.
no hay poder *humano capaz de hacerlo.*

2.2. The order is variable.

2.21 The modifiers are simple adjectives, or function word expressions, connected by open juncture, or/and a coordinator.
una mujer *inteligente, apasionada.*
un *terrible* y *verdadero revólver.*
su palabra *insinuante, elocuente* y *amorosa.*
fuerza *que estimula la acción, que seca los cerebros.*
el caballero *sin miedo* y *sin tacha.*

2.3. The order is partly variable, partly invariable. The modifiers may be a combination of different noun modifier types, connected by open juncture, or/and a coordinator. The modifier immediately following the head may not change position; the position of the remaining modifiers is variable.
volverán a ser las mujeres *mexicanas, compasivas, religiosas, amas de sus casas, resignadas.*

3. The modifier in relation to the head.

3.1. The head is a noun expression.

3.11. The modifier is a noun expression.

3.111. The head and the modifier are connected by close juncture. The modifier precedes.
la chacha Josefina.

3.112. The head and the modifier are connected by potential open juncture. The modifier follows.
don Benigno, *antiguo tenedor de libros.*

3.113. The modifier cannot be recognized. If both elements completely identify the same thing, they are connected by open juncture no matter which of the two elements precedes.
don Leandro, el padre, fué todo un caballero.
la madre, Rosario, que en paz haya.

3.12. The modifier is adjectival.

3.121. The modifier is a simple adjective.

3.121.1. The adjective is a qualifying adjective.

a. The adjective is adjective one. Adjective one is an adjective which practically always follows the head, and has the closest connection to the head.
la cuestión *agraria.*

b. The adjective is adjective two. Adjective two is a qualifying adjective which is found in both anteposition and postposition.
   i. The adjective may precede or follow the head with no recognizable difference in closeness of connection to the head.
   una vida de *constante* trabajo.
   su desarrollo *constante.*
   ii. With certain adjectives two the unit between the head and the adjective may be closer when they follow. This means that these adjectives two may become adjectives one when they follow the head.
   ha sido siempre *amorosa* madre.
   las escenas *amorosas.*
   iii. Sometimes adjectives two appear in set phrases in anteposition. They may become adjectives one in postposition.
   un *buen* mozo.
   esta acción *buena.*

3.121.2. The adjective is a limiting adjective.

a. The adjective precedes the head.
los *demás* clientes.

b. The adjective precedes or follows the head. When a limiting adjective appears in postposition, the criterion of order to determine its class can no longer be applied uniformly in colloquial speech, and class distinction seems to be without significance. The closeness of connection to the head is such that the adjective could be considered either limiting or qualifying. Very often a change in position is connected with a change in meaning. Sometimes, a change in position is also connected with a change in form.
   i. Without change of meaning.
   tienes *bastante* práctica.
   tienes sentimientos *bastantes.*
   ii. With change of meaning.
   defiendo los *mismos* principios que ustedes.
   Dios *mismo.*

iii. Form changes. If *cualquiera, igual, semejante,* or *tal* are used in postposition, a definer is used before the head.
cualquiera cosa.
un accidente *cualquiera.*

3.121.3. The adjective is a definer. The articles always precede, the demonstratives usually; the possessives are found often also in postposition.

a. The adjective precedes.
el jarabe tapatío.

b. The adjective precedes or follows.

i. Difference in form. If the adjective follows, another definer has to precede.
esas cosas tan bonitas.
la patrulla *esa.*
tu misma imaginación.
esas palabras *tuyas.*

ii. No difference in form.
nuestra situación.
amigos *nuestros.*

3.121.4. The adjective is *todo. Todo* normally precedes the head, but may follow when the head is preceded by a definer.
a *todo* galope.
las palabras *todas.*

3.122. The modifier is a function word expression and follows the head.
la más grata sorpresa *de mi vida.*
un olor a tequila *que trae el sujeto.*

3.123. The modifier is a modified adjective.

3.123.1. The adjective is modified by a simple modifier.

a. The modifier is monosyllabic. The adjective is placed where it would be placed without the modifier.
eran mi *más dulce* encanto.
caracteres *muy especiales.*

b. The modifier is polysyllabic. The adjective modified in this way follows the head.
un viejo *enteramente inútil.*

3.123.2. The adjective is modified by an endocentric expression, and follows the head.
un asunto *muy poco airoso.*

3.123.3. The adjective is modified by an exocentric expression, and usually follows the head.
los ojos *anegados en luz.*

3.124. The modifier is a function word, and as such always precedes.
la persona *cuyo* nombre.

3.13. The head and the modifier are connected by *de.* It is irrelevant whether the modifier is a noun or adjective. It always precedes.

ese perdido de Chano.
qué hermosura de mañana.

3.2. The head is pronominal.

3.21. The modifier is substantival.

3.211. Non-address expressions. The modifier follows.
nosotros, *los habitantes.*

3.212. Address expressions. The modifier is the vocative.

3.212.1. The modifier immediately precedes the head. The head and the modifier are connected by potential open juncture.
compañero Medida, tú nos respondes.

3.212.2. The modifier immediately follows the head. The head and the modifier are connected by potential close juncture.
decía usted, *señor Coronel,* que.

3.212.3. The modifier is separated from the head. It may precede or follow the unit formed by the action and its modifiers.
doña Gertru, cuente usted conmigo.
está usted loca, *vecina.*

3.22. The modifier is an adjective.

3.221. The adjective is qualifying.

3.221.1. The adjective precedes. The expression is exclamatory, and the head and the modifier are connected by close juncture, or *de.*
dichoso tú.
envidiosa de ti.

3.221.2. The adjective follows. The expression is non-exclamatory; the head and the adjective are connected by close juncture.
en algo *malo.*

3.221.3. The adjective precedes or follows. The expression consists of two pronominal heads, each with its adjectival modifier, connected by open juncture.
salían los dos como en comedia, *bellísima,* ella, *guapísimo* él.
como dos niñas, una *rubia,* otra *morena.*

3.222. The adjective is limiting.

3.222.1. The head is recognizable.

a. The adjective precedes. Both head and modifier are numerical expressions.
unos quince para acá.

b. The adjective follows.
entre nosotros *tres.*

c. The adjective precedes or follows.
yo encontraré . . . *sola* yo.
una muchacha linda como ella *sola.*

3.222.2. The head is not recognizable. As far as form is concerned, either element could be the head; the combinations found, practically always involved the word *otro,* which precedes a number, follows *ninguno,* and precedes or follows *tanto* or *cualquiera.* However, when *otro* is used with *tanto,* change in position involves change in meaning.
busque a las *otras dos.*
ningún otro.
otro cualquiera.
cualquiera otra.
tantos otros.
asté vale *otro tanto.*

3.223. The adjective is defining.

3.223.1. The adjective precedes. The definer is not a possessive.
las otras dos.

3.223.2. The adjective precedes or follows. The definer is the possessive. Change of form is involved.
es mi protector, *mi* todo.
algo *mío.*

3.224 The modifier is *todo,* and always precedes the head.
todos ustedes.

4. The modifier in relation to the noun expression. A noun modifier may have the syntactical function of indicating beginning or end of a noun expression.

4.1. Beginning of noun expression. *Todo* always indicates beginning of noun expression. If there is no *todo,* a definer has the same function. If neither *todo* or a definer are present, a limiting adjective may fulfill the same function. The limiting adjectives *alguno, cada, cualquiera, ninguno, unos,* and the function words *cuyo* and the interrogatives always indicate beginning of a noun expression since they are never preceded by *todo* or a definer.
todos los demás amigos.
los pocos fondos.
algún otro amante.

4.2. End of noun expression. The one type of modifier which always indicates end of noun expression is a function word clause.
la existencia misma *que yo llevaba.*

5. Summary.
The position of the noun modifier in colloquial Mexican Spanish depends on, or is connected with, certain linguistic phenomena of a very diversified nature, which, to be sure, overlap partly. It seemed appropriate to summarize the study in terms of these phenomena.

5.1. Form of the modifier. Position depends on the form of the modifier. If two modifiers come together, a function word expression usually follows a simple adjective (2.121.1a), a function word

clause follows a function word phrase (2.121.2), and an adjective modified by a function word phrase follows an unmodified adjective (2.132). If the modifier is a function word expression (3.122), it follows the head; if the modifier is, in turn, modified by a polysyllabic element (3.123.1b), or an endocentric expression (3.123.2), it also follows the head. If modified by an exocentric expression (3.123.3), it usually follows the head.

5.2. Class of modifier. Position is connected with class. Adjective classes are established on basis of position of the modifier in anteposition; the adjective closest to the head constitutes the class of qualifying adjective, the one preceding the qualifying constitutes the class of limiting adjective, the one preceding the limiting, defining adjective, which, in turn, is preceded by *todo*, which constitutes a class by itself (2.111). In postposition, however, this connection between position and class may disappear (3.121.2b).

5.3. Unit between head and modifier. Position is connected with the meaning of the noun expression which in turn is expressed by the relative strength of the unit between head and modifier. On basis of position and unit, the contrast between adjective one and adjective two has been established (2.111.1; cf. also 3.121.1a and 3.121.1bii and iii). If two adjectives of the same type come together, unit may influence position, either with two adjectives one (2.112.1), or with two adjectives two (2.112.2), or with two function word phrases (2.112). The influence of the unit may be even stronger than the influence of form (2.121.1; cf. also 2.3).

5.4. Juncture. There is a connection between position and juncture. If two noun modifiers of equal form come together, and are connected by open juncture, they are in free variation of position, whether they are simple adjectives, or function word expressions (2.21). If both head and modifier are nouns, and are connected by close juncture, the modifier precedes (3.111); but if head and modifier are connected by open juncture, the modifier follows (3.112). If the head is a pronoun, and the modifier is a vocative, there is open juncture between the head and the modifier when the modifier precedes (3.212.1), but close juncture when the modifier follows (3.212.2).

5.5. Meaning. A change in position may be connected with a change in meaning. (Meaning here is "lexical meaning"). This semantic change is found especially with adjectives that are limiting in anteposition (3.121.2bii). Meaning also plays a role in a special instance of free variation of position brought about by unrecognizability of the modifier (3.113).

VITA

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